(c) how much wheat has been procured, so far, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Since procurement of foodgrains under Minimum Support Price (MSP) operations carried out by Government agencies is open-ended, no targets are fixed. However, based on estimates given by State Food Secretaries before the start of the Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2007-08, the procurement of wheat in RMS 2007-08 is estimated at 151.5 lakh tonnes.

(b) Since market arrivals of wheat in major wheat producing States was later than usual, it is difficult to predict the total procurement of wheat in RMS 2007-08 at these early stages of the seasons.

(c) The State-wise details of wheat procurement as on 30.04.2007 is as under:—

States	Quantity (in lakh tonnes)
Punjab	53.33
Haryana	24.41
Uttar Pradesh	0.22
Madhya Pradesh	0.02
Rajasthan	0.60
Others	Negligible
TOTAL:	78.58*

*As on 30.04.2007

Procurement of wheat

†3247. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the total set target for Government procurement of wheat this year;

(b) the total quantity of wheat procured, so far, through Government agencies in various States;

(c) whether this quantity is less than the set target; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) if so, the reason for less Government procurement of wheat and the details fo steps being taken to augment procurement of wheat in line with the target?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Since procurement of foodgrains under Minimum Support Price (MSP) operations carried out by Government agencies is open-ended, no targets are fixed. However, based on estimates given by State Food Secretaries before the start of the Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2007-08, the procurement of wheat in RMS 2007-08 is estimated at 151.5 lakh tonnes.

(b) The State-wise details of wheat procurement in RMS 2007-08 (as on 30.4.2007) is as under:—

States	Quantity (in lakh tonnes)
Punjab	53.33
Haryana	24.41
Uttar Pradesh	0.22
Madhya Pradesh	0.02
Rajashtan	0.60
Others	Negligible
TOTAL:	78.58*

*As on 30.04.2007

(c) and (d) Since market arrivals of wheat in major wheat producing States was later than usual procurement of wheat in RMS 2007-08 is less than the corresponding procurement in RMS 2006-07. The steps taken by the government to enhance procurement of wheat are given in Statement.

Statement

Steps taken by the Government to enhance procurement of wheat in Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2007-08.

(i) The Minimum Support Price for wheat was fixed at Rs. 750 per quintal for RMS 2007-08, an increase fo Rs. 100 per quintal, in order to encourage farmers to grow more wheat. Now, according to the Third Advance Estimates of the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, the estimated production of wheat is likely to be

73.7 million tonnes in crop year 2006-07 compared to 69.3 million tonnes in crop year 2005-06.

(ii) An incentive bonus of Rs. 100 per quintal over and above the MSP is also being given in RMS 2007-08.

(iii) A Committee of officers/Expert was formed to recommend an appropriate strategy for wheat procurement in RMS 2007-08, and the recommendations of this Committee have been acted upon appropriately by the Government.

(iv) Import of 55 lakh tonnes of wheat was done in 2006-07 which has improved the stock position of wheat in the central pool and the wheat stocks (as on 1.4.2007) were more than the buffer norms of 40 lakh tonnes at the state of RMS 2007-08.

(v) Wheat exports on private account have been banned upto 31.12.2007. Wheat exports from Central Pool are also banned.

(vi) Decision was taken to release 4 lakh tonnes of wheat under OMSS in February and March, 2007 to cool the market prices before the start of RMS 2007-08.

(vii) The Government is keeping very close watch on domestic and international prices of wheat.

(viii) A notification titled "Wheat (Stock Declaration by companies or Firms or Individuals) Order 2007 has been issued under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 on 1.3.2007. The order provides that any Company or Firm or individual which purchases wheat beyond 50,000 tonnes during 2007-08 shall furnish to the Central Government return indicating the name/address of the company, quantity of wheat purchased and quantity of wheat held in stock.

(ix) Department of Consumer Affairs has extended upto 31st August, 2007 notification under the EC Act enabling State Governments to impose stock limit on wheat and pulses.

(x) Import of wheat on private account at zero duty has been permitted upto 31.12.2007.

(xi) 13128 centers for wheat procurement have been opened by Government agencies in RMS 2007-08 as compared to 8985 centers in RMS 2006-07.

(xii) Senior Officers of Department of Food and Public Distribution and FCI are frequently visiting wheat procuring States to personally assess the situation.

Procurement by FCI

3248. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the official procuring agency, the Food Corporation of India, has not been able to procure enough foodgrains this season due to the entry of private traders offering better market prices that the official minimum support price (MSP);

(b) if so, the quantity of foodgrains procured by FCI in various places,so far;

(c) whether Government propose to offer market prices to the farmers to fulfil the targeted procurement quota by FCI; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Since market arrivals of wheat in major wheat producing States was later than usual, procurement of wheat in RMS 2007-08 so far is less than the corrresponding procurement in RMS 2006-07. 80.66 lakh tonnes of wheat has been procured by the FCI and State agencies as on 1.5.2007 against a quantity of 88.24 lakh tonnes of wheat procured in the corresponding period in RMS 2006-07.

The State-wise procurement as on 1.5.2007 is given below:—

(in lakh tonnes)

State	FCI	State Agencies	Total
Punjab	6.29	48.31	54.59
Haryana	2.82	22.33	25.15
U.P.	0.05	0.22	0.27
M.P.	0.01	0.01	0.02
Rajasthan	0.57	0.05	0.62
Uttarakhand	Negligible	0.01	0.01
Others	0.01	0.20	-
TOTAL	9.75	70.91	80.66